

Hunter's Bar Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106995
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	309281
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Rosemary Eaton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	5–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alastair Goldman
Headteacher	Ms Michelle Hayes
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2004
School address	Sharrow Vale Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S11 8ZG
Telephone number	0114 2660541
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Age group	5-7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized infant school. Currently, 86 children are in the Foundation Stage. When they join the Reception year, children's skills are broadly in line with what is typical for their age, though below expectations in writing. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average. Pupils of Pakistani heritage make up the largest of these groups. Increasing numbers are joining the school in the early stages of learning the English language and the proportion is currently above the national average. A smaller than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' home circumstances are very varied. Many travel to the school from distant parts of Sheffield. The school has gained the Activemark and Eco-school Bronze awards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2007 and the Foundation Stage leader in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school accurately judges its effectiveness to be satisfactory. However, it is an improving school and already has some good features. Among these is pupils' personal development. They love their school and are very happy there, because 'people are good friends'. Many parents praise the way in which the school cares for their children. In turn, pupils look out for each other and are very keen to take on responsibilities such as being a 'playground buddy'. Such exceptional contributions to the school community have a significant impact on pupils' well-being. One child reflected this by remarking, 'When I'm lonely, someone comes up and plays with me.'

Pupils are very impressed by the range of clubs the school offers. For example, members of the garden and nature club have transformed a corner of the playground. Visitors to school mirror the breadth of cultures represented by its pupils and help to enrich the basic curriculum. All year groups worked with a visiting artist, using textiles and other media to create a fabulous model of a tiger. Staff work hard and successfully to encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes to their health. For example, plenty of time is allowed for pupils to enjoy their daily fruit. Pupils' good behaviour helps them to feel safe in school. They know exactly how to respond on the rare occasions when other children make them feel unhappy: 'walk away and then tell a teacher'. Pupils are clearly aware that the school values each one of them and they are proud of their individual skills and qualities, such as being a good friend or speaking a number of languages.

Pupils' enthusiasm for life and learning is not reflected fully in their academic achievement. During Years 1 and 2 they make satisfactory progress, reaching broadly average standards by the time they leave school. Pupils' attainment is best in reading, with numeracy and writing being comparatively weaker areas. This satisfactory achievement is the result of satisfactory teaching. Teachers make thorough assessments of pupils' learning, but do not consistently use this information to the full when they plan lessons. Tasks are not always matched closely enough to what pupils need to learn next. In particular, work for the most able pupils often lacks the challenge needed to enable them to make good progress.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership. They have quickly identified where improvement is needed and, with energy and determination, enhanced by the strong support of governors, have set about achieving this. Sharply focused training for staff and new procedures, such as those to track pupils' progress, are helping to move the school forward. For example, pupils are more aware of what they need to do in order to improve their writing and numeracy. The school currently demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve, rather than good, because these developments and other planned initiatives have yet to have an impact on standards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents are full of praise for the way in which their children are introduced to the Reception year, helped to settle in quickly and start learning. Sensitive care and attention to children's all round development underpin the good provision in the Foundation Stage. Activities are planned carefully. They range from sessions led by adults to frequent opportunities for children to choose from enjoyable and stimulating resources and pursuits. Children move freely between

classrooms, but there is a shortage of suitable outdoor space and some of it is located inconveniently. The staff do their best to compensate for these deficiencies, but children's freedom to learn independently is inevitably restricted. Children make good progress in their learning, because they are taught well with their individual needs taken carefully into account. By the end of the Foundation Stage, standards often exceed typical expectations in personal, social and emotional development. Writing is promoted imaginatively. For example, girls and boys were stimulated to write about a model football game and delighted by football themed pencils and paper. Under the clear direction of the new Foundation Stage leader, teachers and teaching assistants are working increasingly closely together. For example, they all contribute to the comprehensive and useful records of each child's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in writing and numeracy.
- Improve teaching to ensure that lessons meet the needs of all pupils, especially in relation to the level of challenge for the most able.
- Improve the outdoor accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In 2007, assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 showed that standards had declined since the previous year and were just below average overall. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was roughly average in reading and numeracy, but only one pupil reached the higher level in writing. The school missed its targets, which were very challenging, except in reading. There are strong indications that this year's targets will be met in reading and numeracy, though not in writing. The school has recently begun to analyse the progress made by different groups of pupils and evidence suggests that all pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are currently making satisfactory progress. Progress is fastest in reading and is beginning to accelerate in writing as a result of focused actions by the school this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds work and play together happily. In the playground, they are lively and energetic, but considerate of others. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to each other, encouraging those still learning to speak English to practise their new skills. Attendance is satisfactory, although extended absences disrupt the education of a small minority of pupils. Pupils think about the needs of less fortunate people and regularly raise funds for charities. They relish being members of the 'job squad' or school council. Pupils' views contribute to school developments, such as planned improvements to the playground. They leave school with positive attitudes to work and average literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, pupils' readiness for Year 3 is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers praise pupils' efforts, giving them confidence and ensuring that they enjoy learning. High expectations of pupils' behaviour and clear guidance mean that lessons run smoothly. Teaching assistants frequently make good contributions to lessons, for example, by supporting particular groups of pupils. Teachers often organise interesting and varied activities. In a numeracy lesson, games and information and communication technology motivated Year 1 pupils and helped them to learn well. However, in too many lessons, pupils in Years 1 and 2 sit for too long listening to the teacher and occasionally answering questions. This is in sharp contrast to the active and independent learning in the Reception year. Teachers are not always successful in matching tasks to what each pupil needs to learn next. Work in literacy and numeracy is sometimes too hard for lower attaining pupils, while the most able complete tasks too quickly and do not learn enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Pupils are offered plenty of well planned opportunities for personal development. A programme covering social and emotional aspects of learning is proving successful in raising pupils' awareness, for example of the importance of friendship. Teachers make some good links between subjects. The school has plans to develop this work much further, in order to enable pupils to consolidate their skills regularly through practical activities and in meaningful contexts. A visiting Zimbabwean story teller demonstrated this approach superbly. Year 2 pupils were enthralled by and actively involved in activities linking music, art, designing, making and numeracy, preparing them wonderfully for writing a story. Special arrangements are increasingly made for particular groups of pupils. For example, a science club enables the more able pupils to pursue their interests and extend their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care and pastoral support are good. Parents appreciate the school's 'warm and welcoming atmosphere'. Current safeguarding requirements are met and staff training in child protection is up to date. Strong partnerships with a variety of agencies and professionals enhance the school's work, for example, in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A programme of 'talking partners' successfully helps pupils with speech and language difficulties and those in the early stages of learning English to develop their speaking and listening skills. Academic guidance is satisfactory and has improved recently. Pupils can often recall their targets for writing and numeracy and know that these are intended to help them to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The number of key priorities identified in improvement planning is small, ensuring that all staff are fully aware of where to focus their efforts, notably on raising

standards in writing and numeracy. Year group leaders are beginning to play a significant role in monitoring performance, for example, by observing lessons and checking teachers' assessments of pupils' progress. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall, although more variable in quality, because this role is new to a number of teachers. Governance is good. Since the previous inspection, governors have become much more representative of the ethnic diversity of the school. They are well informed, highly committed and often actively involved in helping to improve provision. Leaders welcome and make very good use of advice and support from local authority staff.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you playing and learning. This letter is to tell you what we found out about the school. We decided that the school is satisfactory and there are some good things about it.

It is a very happy school and everyone gets on together well. We were impressed by your good behaviour and how well you look out for each other. You do a great deal to help your teachers, your friends and people who are not as lucky as you. Well done! You told us you feel safe in school. This is because the school takes such good care of you. The teachers organise some super visits and visitors to help you learn. We know that you like the clubs.

You make quite fast progress in reading, but we have asked the school to help you learn faster in writing and numeracy. We also want your teachers to make sure work is just hard enough for each one of you. You can help your teachers by telling them if your work is too hard or too easy. Lastly, we saw that the children in Reception don't have much space outside to work and play in. We would like this to be improved.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governors have lots of good ideas to improve the school. We send them and each one of you our very best wishes for the future.